

FREE

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It's Only ROCK'N'ROLL



SIRIUS

NAZARETH

ROBERT FRIPP

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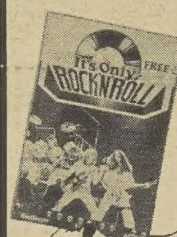
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by Robbin Cresswell



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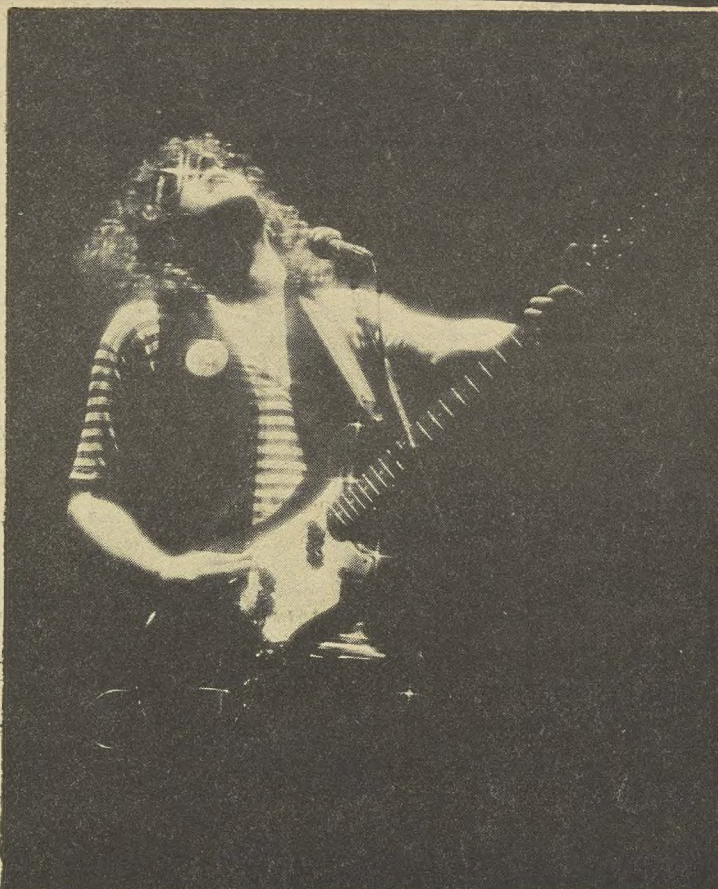


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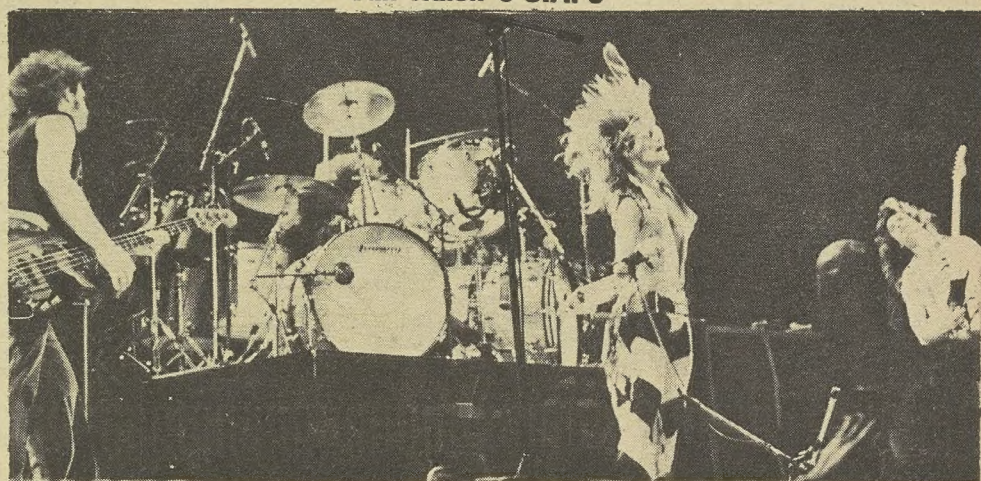
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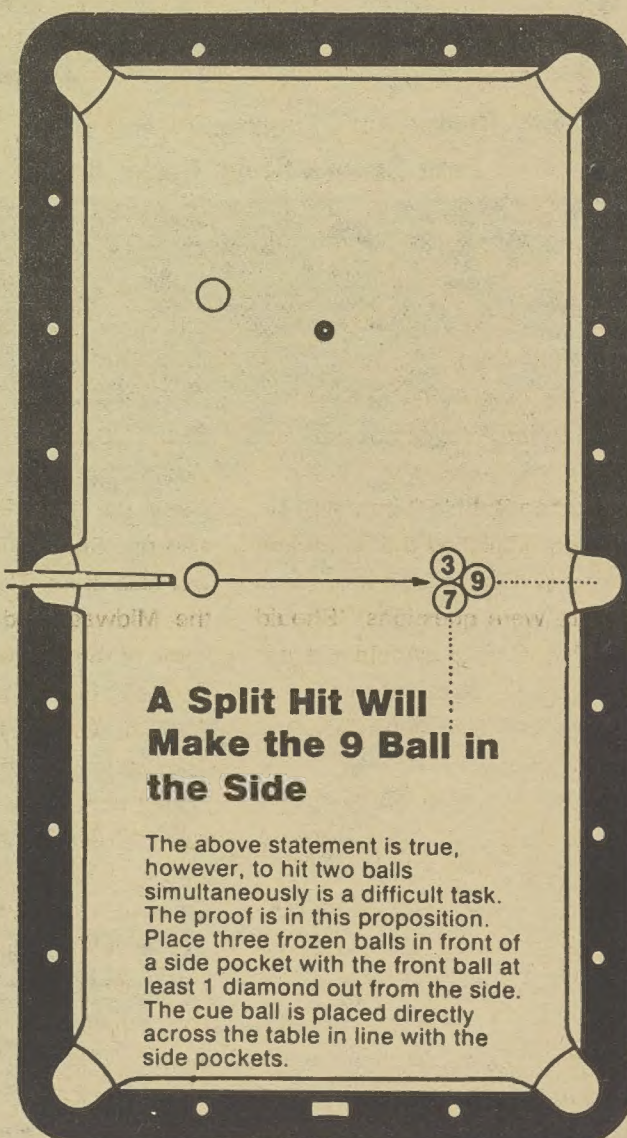
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From Bubble Puppy To Demian To Sirius

by Frank Haecker (and everything in between)

Many people don't realize it but members of the band Sirius have had heavy experience in the rock business. The band consists of Todd Potter and Rod Prince on guitar, George Rarey on bass and Mark "Emory Bangwell" Evans on drums. Sirius has been together since November of '77, about 1-1/2 years. Rod and Todd, however, started playing together in 1967. "We played together for 4 years at that time, then split up and then started working again together in '77." In November of '67 they started the Bubble Puppy, one of the hottest Texas acts around 1968/69. They had the hit 'Hot Smoke and Sasafrass' in December of '68 just a year later. Todd remembers; "I was 17 at the time, I just quit high school to go play in a band."

Before the Bubble Puppy, Rod was in a Corpus Christi group called the "Bad Seeds" around 1964 or '63. "We had three singles." After that; "We had a slight thing together with myself, Roy Cox, and somebody else. . . We had a little trip going with Mike Nesmith when the Monkees were originally hot, and so we were all rotting in California sitting on the grass. . . It was all wasted years, years uncounted, hanging out." Then Rod came back and had planned to go to helicopter school and be a pilot, but Roy called him around Christmas of '67 and asked him to come play with Tommy Smith and the Laughing Kind. "It was a lot better than helicopter school and it doesn't cost eighty thousand dollars," Rod remarked. He played in that band along with Todd. Rod recalls "Tommy Smith pulled us all together," but they only played for awhile as the "Laughing Kind" and then, according to Todd, "We decided that we'd continue the same band that had been put together behind Tommy, apart from Tommy, and that's when Bubble Puppy was actually formed. . . picked the name and went after it." "Did go for it too," says Rod. "There were questions; 'Should we have Roy Cox or should we not have Roy Cox?' 'Should we have Danny Galindo (13th Floor Elevators 2nd bass player) instead?'"

The Bubble Puppy recorded for International Artists a now-defunct Texas label based in Houston and also known as IA. When asked if Bubble Puppy made a lot of money and record royalties with IA, Todd said "Yea, we did pretty well for the time. We were kind of mismanaged and didn't make as much as a band of our caliber and status should have. . . We did get taken

for some money. International Artists. . . didn't quite know what to do with a band that was breaking like we were, so it wasn't that they were ripping us off per se. . . which is a whole lot why we decided to do our own production company this time around. Lelan Rogers (Kenny Rogers brother and original owner of the IA label) was involved with the Bubble Puppy. He had lost the label before they signed with it. Todd says; "These two lawyers had won it from him. . . in a law suit or it was payment for their services of something like that. These two lawyers Jail (?) Patterson and Bill Dillard had the label at the time we were on it. . . although he (Lelan) does own the masters now, he bought the masters." And they know Lelan has re-issued the IA catalog but so far, they have not gotten anything from it. " . . we're gonna try to find out what's happening with it and see if there's any royalties due us if its selling." They never got an exact accounting on how well the original release of the album sold. After realizing they were not being handled right the group left IA and went to ABC records and so never got an exact accounting of album sales. The single "Hot Smoke" however, sold well over a half a million, possibly three quarters of a million. The record was a national hit and reached number 10 in the nation, number 10 in Record World and number 11 in Billboard.

Most of their money was made from live appearances. Back then they played up and down the East Coast quite a lot, and in the Midwest going as far west as New Mexico, but never to the West Coast except to appear on American Bandstand. They also appeared on another national show called Scene '70 and the "Larry Kane Show," a fairly big show out of Houston, a show the 13th Floor Elevators were also on. Some shows in San Antonio were also done. The group headlined in the Midwest and opened shows for some of the giants of the times such as Canned Heat, The Turtles, Jefferson Airplane, Grand Funk Railroad and fellow Texan Johnny Winter who they played with a lot. They also headlined some shows in Canada where the record was real big.

Then IA started falling behind. " . . the second single was late coming out. The album was late coming out. The timing wasn't right on everything," Todd says "so we kind of lost a little ground." The band was with IA about a year, after which, "We de-



Sirius Ain't No Joke

cided that we could do better elsewhere and went out to California and got our deal with Dunhill." It was at this time that they put out their second album under the name Demian, but there is no accounting of how well this album sold either. That band broke up in California and was the same band as Bubble Puppy only under a different name.

After the band broke up Todd stayed out in California for awhile and did some demos but mostly played with lounge and bar bands. Then he moved back to Texas and started playing with Rusty Wier. He played on several of Rusty's albums; the 'beltbuckle' album, the "Black Hat Saloon" album, the "Stacked Deck" album and also a live album that was never released. He was also in on the first few sessions of the "Austin Allstars" album, a local Austin release showcasing the talents of a lot of ex-members of popular Austin groups.

Sirius bass player George Rarey also played with Rusty Wier's band for about a year and a half. Before then he played with another familiar local band of days past, "Sweet Smoke," for about 3 years. It was basically a semi-commercial bar band. Before that he was in and out of bands a lot.

Meanwhile, Rod had been playing with former members of Steppenwolf in a group called Manbeast. He and Todd decided to reform as the Bubble Puppy along with George, but later changed the name to Sirius.

The present band has thought of trying to make a comeback as the Bubble Puppy, in the same way as Kenny and the Kasuals and the Red Crayola are doing, but according to Todd "Our style is somewhat changed, and we have two members in the band that weren't involved with Bubble Puppy and they have their own identities. We feel like this is a new identity, Sirius, and it's new music, and we're marketing it that way. We feel like the Sirius material is valid enough to where we can market it under a new name, and there's been so many reformed groups that weren't up to par that we don't want to be associated with that sort of a situation. . . There's been a lot of

bands who've come back on the scene, seemingly just to make the money that they can dig out of what used to be, and that's not where we wanna be. We want to market the new name and stand on what we're doing today as opposed to what we did in the past."

Elcric Flow, the bands own label, is marketing their new album, *Sirius/Rising* (see Vinyl Habits for a review), primarily through Sound Warehouse, Galaxy (Record Town) and Bromo on a consignment basis. They want to be able to back up their sales with store and distributor invoices when they are ready to approach a major distributing network. The Sirius album is in all the Austin and San Antonio stores and is being aired on KISS/KMAC where the Demian album also got airplay when it came out in 1971. The album has also been aired on KLBK in Austin and possibly Q102 in Dallas. Two thousand of the Sirius albums have been pressed with 5,000 more on the way (probably here by now). "So we'll have plenty of records to keep up with it, if it starts doing real well," says Todd. "It's already doing real well here in Austin. . . We would like to sell as many records as the Texas market will allow and then we'll hook up with a major distributing network and market it nationally."

Todd says his major influence is Eric Clapton but he also has some L.A. influences from the days after Demian broke up when he played a lot of standard type material in lounges out in California.

Todd says they sometimes describe the group's sound as Power Pop because "It's hard rock but it's melodic at the same time. It's listenable. It's not offensive and it kinda crosses over to a pretty broad age bracket. . . That's what we're trying to do, hit as broad a market as we can. It's not really a hard rock thing." However, Todd admits the stage show "is probably geared more for rock'n'roll audiences."

Part of the groups' philosophy, as proved by their independence and self reliance in promoting themselves and marketing their own record, is, "If you want the job done right do it yourself." Todd continues, "Primarily from the

SIRIUS



Todd Potter



Rod Prince



George Rarey



Mark Evans

beginning we've tried to gather people with positive energies, then focus on the same goal and work toward it."

Since the band started recording their album in October they have not done a lot of shows. They have done some short 2 or 3 day things as an opening act but no touring or anything major. Mostly they have been playing around Texas.

The band would like to market 6 or 8 Sirius records and tour nationally or internationally and, as Todd feels, "...just be able to spread our music around as far as we can. We'd like to have Sirius support as many people as it can, that's our goal. Nobody's trying to get rich, we're just trying to help everybody out."

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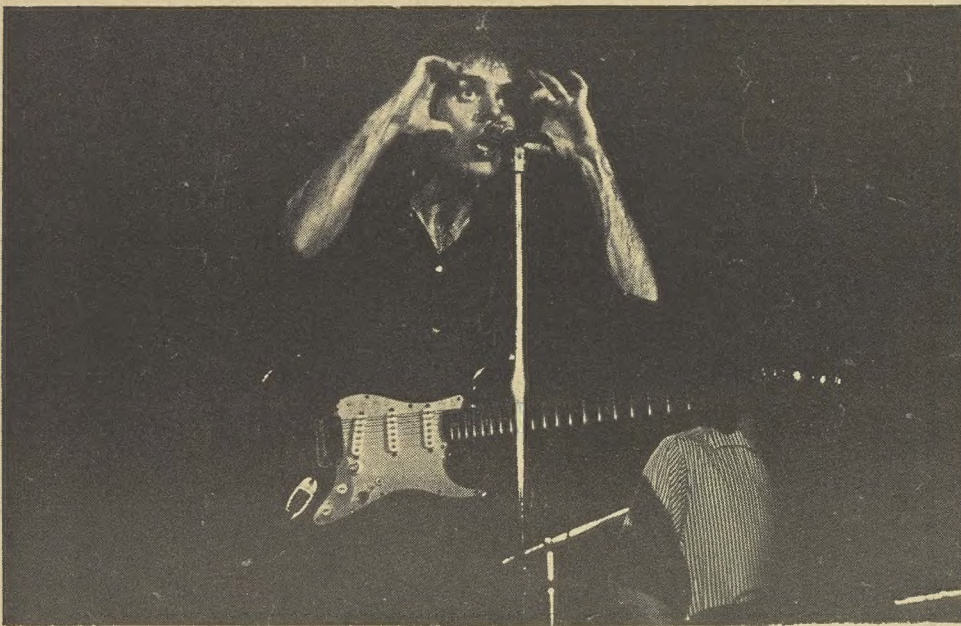
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John Hiatt On The Slugline



John Hiatt - Warns of No More Dancin' In The Streets

by Ron Young

Backstage at the Austin Opry House while Ian Hunter and his band of hired killers does in a ravenous crowd of ex-Mott the Hoople fans John Hiatt stands in the middle of a clothes-strewn room reading my short but sweet review of his third album *Slug Line*.

"I don't think I sound like Dirk Hamilton, do you?" I reply that it was the only thing I could latch onto in order to convey what I thought John Hiatt was like to our readers. (Comparisons are too easily made in rock criticism; unfortunately it's sometimes all you can do.) Hiatt's new album features some of the most exciting and original compositions I've heard this year, and I listen to a lot of music. He and his band of nine weeks (Steven T. on guitar, Howard Epstein on bass, Dan Shmitt on drums and Hiatt himself on rhythm and lead vocals) weave a musical fabric so fine that you don't notice the seams. Together they're known as The Combo and they play Hiatt's rich rock'n'roll music with exuberance and a searing energy.

Performing onstage Hiatt doesn't seem too at ease fronting a band. "I never had any desire to be a recording artist. I was originally a staff writer for Tree Publishing in Nashville and the two albums I recorded for Epic (the last being *Overcoat* in '75) were really just collections of songs from a five year period. They were just opportunities to get the tunes off my chest. I had no thoughts of touring to support the records and it really was just a fluke. *Overcoat* was a failure and I was sort of disenchanted but I'm very happy with the way *Slug Line* turned out."

As a writer Hiatt's best quality is his intriguing lyrics. Most of his songs are vignettes set to a rock'n'roll beat. "The Night That Kenny Died" is about "the high school class nerd who nobody liked and who one night ran his motorcycle into a Plymouth and suddenly be-

came a James Dean figure." "The Negroes Were Dancin'" conjures up a dark vision of sweaty, sexy blacks dancing in the streets; a kind of summation of rock'n'roll. "You Used To Kiss The Girls" seems to be about a one time rock'n'roll carouser turned middle class car/home/wife-owner. His new album for MCA Records has a live sound to it that makes the songs fairly jump out at the listener. It's due mainly to the fine production work of manager Denny Bruce. The album was done using all studio musicians, including drummer B.J. Wilson former Procul Harum member. But the next album will feature Hiatt's current band. He sings in a well-controlled plaintive tenor, which is perhaps featured best on "Madonna Road" a self-penned raggaie number that's finally sung with authenticity by a white singer. One record reviewer fingered Hiatt as an American Elvis Costello. ("There's no comparison.")

As a stage performer the 27-year old Hiatt has a ways to go before he can flash his charisma around to have an audience's attention riveted on him but as a songwriter, look out! Some of his songs have been recently recorded by others such as Conway Twitty ("Heavy Tears"), The Neville Bros. ("Washable Ink"), Frankie Miller ("If I Can Love Somebody"—only on the European version of his latest LP *Perfect Fit*) and Maria Muldaur ("No More Dancin' In The Street"). "She really ruined that song by taking a lot of the punch out of it," Hiatt complains. "But the best thing about cover versions of my songs is that it keeps these guys (The Combo) off the road."

The end of that road is not yet in sight. Hiatt and Co. have done six dates opening for Ian Hunter and will continue to play small clubs, which they prefer, through September. Then they'll tour Europe some before coming back to the States to record the next album. Hopefully, it will be a long and prosperous road for the Indianapolis-born Hiatt. ●



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Nazareth

Mean City And Back

by Brent Stone

I once told Dan McCafferty that Nazareth was synonymous with rock-n-roll. He appreciated the compliment, or so it seemed. I assured myself later, after witnessing the fervor of Nazareth in concert, that my observation was credible, that Nazareth is no less than prolific in its stage performance. That was four years ago, I tell him the same each time we meet. I know now my observation was correct.

As subject, Dan McCafferty, 32, is challenging. He is a boundless source of contemporary ideology, an engaging artist who can be readily recognized by a concert hall assemblage, by voice over the car radio. He assumes no affectation to enhance his blazen image. He is very much himself.

McCafferty began his singing career at the age of 13, while performing in speakeasys in Northern Scotland. His brassy vocals fronted a stable of bands before Nazareth, the group he formed in 1969 with Pete Agnew, Manny Charlton and Darrel Sweet.

Since then, Nazareth has fostered a total of nine Lps, most notably Hair of the Dog, most recently No Mean City.

No Mean City is, as McCafferty explains, a departure from previous work. The record is conceptual (based upon the book, No Mean City, by McArthur and Long) and introduces guitarist Zal Cleminson as the fifth member of the group ("The addition of Zal enables the band to pursue new directions").

I have spoken with McCafferty on several occasions, each time as a prelude to a formal interview that somehow failed to materialize for lack of time and proper location. Most conversations, as the following, were backstage.

Dressed comfortably in jeans, an undershirt and tennis shoes, McCafferty lights his second Marlboro ("I have both kinds," he says with a glee, wielding a pack of Salem in one hand, Marlboro in the other). He's ready to talk.

Recent press projects Nazareth as a hell-raising rock-n-roll outfit. How do you relate to such an image?

Musically we are. That's the way we play rock-n-roll (pauses).

We just play music. We have been compared to Led Zeppelin, for instance but the similarity there is only in the style of playing. We prefer to play aggressively. Most British rock-n-roll bands do. Our opinion of ourselves is that we are a rock-n-roll band, and we

do it well. The music makes you feel it.

Expect No Mercy and No Mean City seem relative. Did the band employ concepts to unify each project?

Expect No Mercy was structured about life on the street. The record conveys that attitude. *No Mean City* is an extension of that concept.

No Mean City was a book written during the depression. The book reflected life during the depression—gambling, whores, no work, violence. The hero of the book, Johnny Stark, relies upon his own resources as a method of survival—those resources being two cut-throat razors. The plot documents his travail. Basically, we tried to apply his attitude or lifestyle to a contemporary social condition. In setting the piece, however, some things remain unchanged—there are still ghettos. And you don't have to be black to live in a ghetto, I grew up in one and saw very few blacks.

The black native to the ghetto would probably disagree.

Anyone growing up in a working class environment can recognize and identify with Johnny Stark. Poverty isn't a particular characteristic belonging solely to one ethnic group.

Could the middle class identify with what you are saying from a working class point of view?

I would think so. "Simple Solution," for instance, doesn't necessarily apply only to the working class. Anyone outside of the working class mold can grasp the meaning of the song.

There seems to be an element of pessimism with the lyrical content of No Mean City. Was this intentional?

No at all. We are reflecting what we see in reality. But we are also saying, "You don't have to experience this facet of reality to know what it's like."

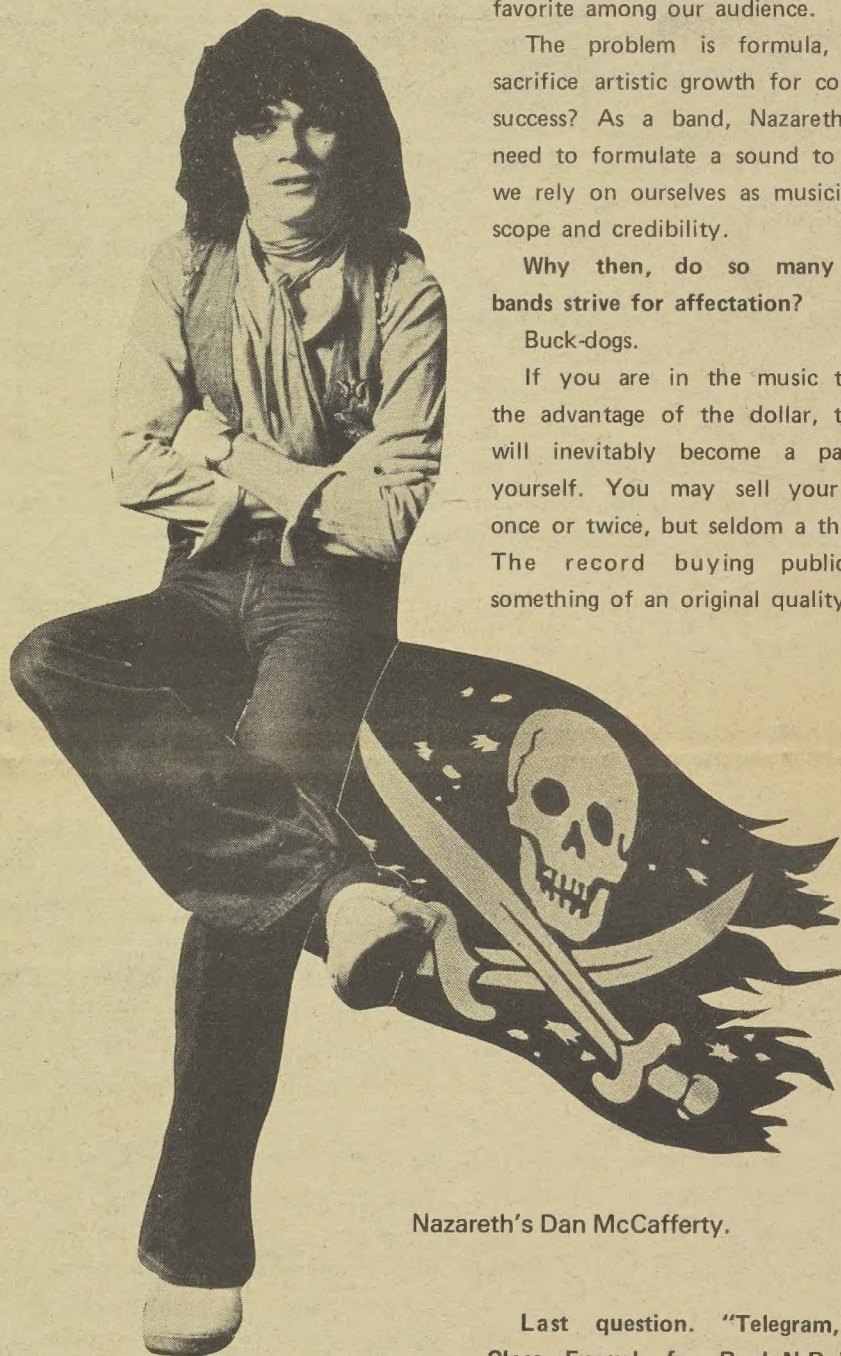
If you live in New York, and someone says to you, "Don't go to Harlem." And you disregard that advice and go there—you're asking for trouble. If someone has told you something of this significance, undoubtedly they're speaking from experience.

This is what we are trying to project. In a movie, for example, the situation may look quite simple and easy. But once you involve yourself in a circumstance of this intensity—the romanticism becomes gruesomely real.

There is an explicit way of expressing this: "If you can handle it - rock on time; if you don't know - stay away."

This seems to explain Nazareth's appeal, simply in view of the fact that people often entertain the notion of confronting a character of Stark's demeanor, usually casting themselves in the role of the hero.

I'm not quite sure. The fact that characters like Stark do somewhere exist, and the omni-presence of death - or trouble for that matter - is all relevant. People do identify with it - perhaps fantasize about it. As far as explaining appeal, this is probably one facet of Nazareth our public identifies with.



Nazareth's Dan McCafferty.

They never released the record in the first place. They put it out prior to the band's release of *Hair of the Dog*. So, to avoid competition, my album was pulled from distribution. At that particular time, a formal release date was never actually set.

Having laid out so much of your life for public ears, what would you like your public to understand about you that they don't understand now?

We don't want to be stuck in a corner. The biggest hit we have ever had was *Hair of the Dog*. Chartwise, "Love Hurts" was the big single. In concert, "Hair of the Dog" became the favorite among our audience.

The problem is formula, do you sacrifice artistic growth for commercial success? As a band, Nazareth doesn't need to formulate a sound to endure - we rely on ourselves as musicians with scope and credibility.

Why then, do so many current bands strive for affectation?

Buck-dogs.

If you are in the music trade for the advantage of the dollar, then you will inevitably become a parody of yourself. You may sell your "copy" once or twice, but seldom a third time. The record buying public wants something of an original quality.

Is there an element of mystique at work during the band's performance?

Not really mystique. Everyone in the band is a different character - these personalities are the vital chemistry of Nazareth.

Take anyone else from the band aside, his observation would be entirely different. As for me, the mystique of Nazareth is within the unit.

Your solo album had a personality of its own...

Those were my favorite songs, people that I wanted to work with - I knew exactly what I wanted to do. Basically, I wanted to sing

Nazareth's record buying public is probably unaware of its availability. What prompted A&M to re-release the album?

Last question. "Telegram," from *Close Enough for Rock-N-Roll*, is as you once told me, parody. However, in researching for this interview, reviews of the album indicate that most critics failed to recognize the humor through which the song was approached. Why could something so obvious be so carelessly overlooked?

The critics didn't even sense the humor. We were criticized by the media for including a song that expresses satirically the negative aspects of rock-n-roll. That's their opinion, right? I don't particularly like successful rock journals. They tend to glamourize artists who have personality but no talent. Nazareth doesn't need to make the cover of *Rolling Stone* to sell records - although it might be great promotion. We prefer to let the music speak for itself. ●

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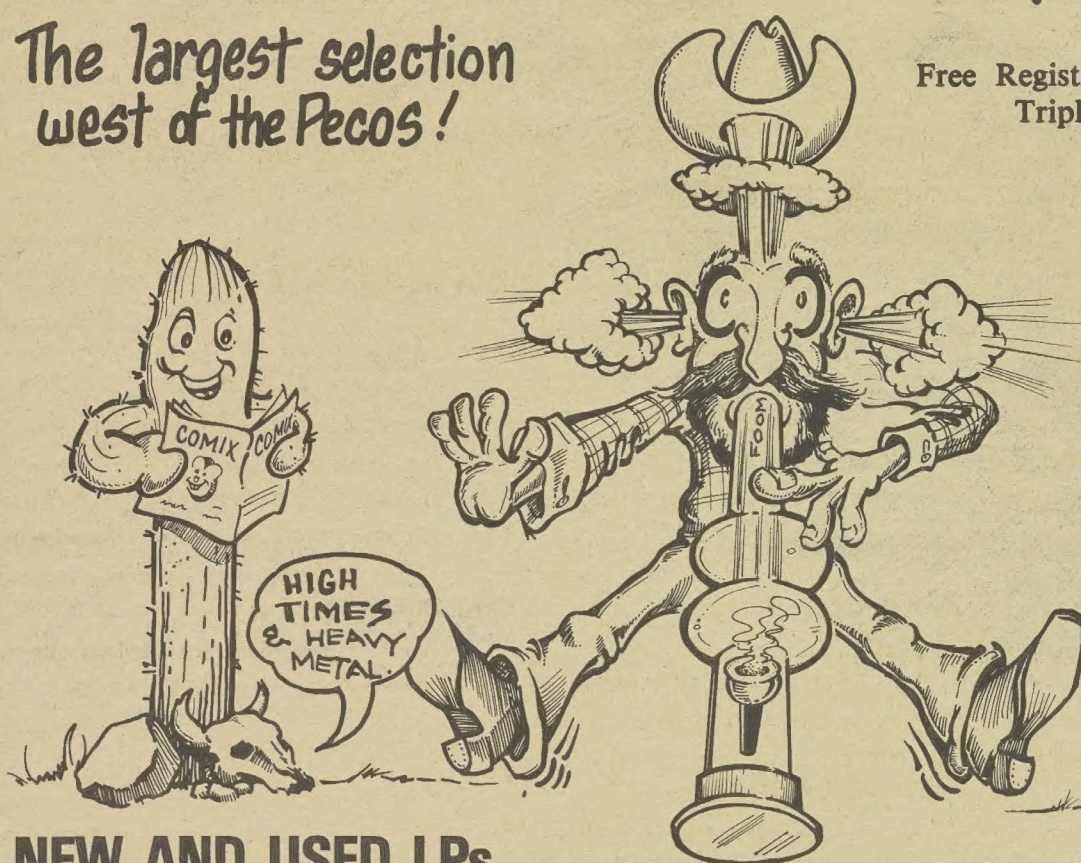
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POSTER No.5

Robert Fripps Small Mobile Saying

by David Arthur & Scott A. Cupp

"It was when King Crimson played to 15,000 people in Rome that it got to me. We had done our set and an encore and the crowd was upset at us not playing longer so they started rioting. They broke the power cables... the Rome police sent us a note saying: will you please play a second encore cause we don't want to have to use guns. So we went back out and the crowd's mood went quickly from anger to joy. But the power lines were broken so their mood again quickly changed. I went out on stage and this fan followed me on. When I saw his blood hitting the floor before he did I knew something was wrong, that there was a better way."

The speaker, British guitarist Robert Fripp, held to be of the most brilliant guitarists around. His better way: an anti-tour, a small tour playing for crowds of 12 to 250. It consists of no back-up group, just Fripp, his guitar and the Frippertronics system. Judging from the reaction of the crowd at the Soundwarehouse in Austin, where Fripp appeared to stun them with his playing, the idea is working. The audience, to say the least was appreciative, Fripp was relaxed and friendly, talking to them, answering their questions, and making jokes.

"This idea of a small, mobile, intelligent unit (i.e., the anti-tour) is an alternative to the form of operations done in dinosauric ways, 50 road managers and so on. If these ideas work, I should be able to make them work for me. If I can't do it, then they don't stand up. I'm only hot air. Words are cheap. I tend to distrust rhetoric and believe action. If a person incorporates their bright words into what they do, I have more faith in them. So obviously I have to make these ideas work. It also gives me a remarkable way of working in concrete terms with an abstract idea which seems to be right. My instincts are pretty good and this seems to be right so now let me make it work. And it works."

Fripp's first words to the crowd in Austin bear out the above: "As an audience you feel that the performer has a responsibility to do his best. But you too have a responsibility, to listen to the performer instead of just hearing. You must be active in this way." Fripp goes on to say that an audience "can't be just vampiric," that they must take an active part for anything worthwhile to be accomplished.

The main body of Fripp's philosophy was evolved during his "retirement" from music which spanned the time after he dissolved King Crimson in 1974 to his collaboration on Bowie's *Heroes* in 1977. Since then he has played on both of Peter Gabriel's solo albums, touring with the first one and producing the second one and also produced the Roches, a folk trio, which would seem to be a rather large departure for him.

"My personal demand in any working situation is that I can learn from the people I'm working with and if I can't then I don't work with them. I was asked to produce a well-known



Robert Fripp Plays with Himself - On Tape

New Wave band in England. I told them I didn't make records for a living, I made them for an education and I wasn't sure I would learn sufficiently to warrant giving up three months of my life. Which wasn't being nasty in any way. I get on well with them.

"With the Roches, I learned an incredible amount. Remarkable, working with three very direct women who were not prepared to take any shit from this... this man. (Laughter) Life is an educational process. It would be nice if the people I work with learn something from me.

"The Roches and this idea of audio verite. That's probably the best production I've ever done. Linda Rondstat, who's a heavy Roches fan, said 'when I first heard the Roches record I was very pleased you had done no production. Then I listened to it on headphones.' Paul Simon said the same thing. It's actually remarkable production work but only possible because the Roches themselves are so good.

"Audio verite is an expression, first of all, a way of working, instead of thinking let's have a nice format, commercial record with pre-digested sounds. It's a commitment to trying to discover whatever the essence of the performers might be. So it's an organic process of discovery, in a sense. It's trying to present a perspective of the artist in a recording sense. It's also a way of recording technically flat without much equalization. So you get a lot nearer to what they are.

"This idea of abandoning the center, was I think, the main innovation in terms of recording. Normally what happens in stereo, the producer sits in the middle and all his perspectives are

to do with the Roches. So I said that perhaps it might be valid to record them this way but that the Roches should have three months to work with that combination. But I said, the Roches willing, that I would go into rehearsal with a rhythm section. We tried two tracks and the rhythm section was good but the Roches simply didn't need a rhythm section."

When asked if problems with recording have extended to his collaborations and guest appearances as well, Fripp replied affirmatively. "Most producers expect guitars to sound a certain way. I think the only person who could produce me is Eno because he would give me the room I need. I like to work spontaneously. In fact Frippertronics was conceived by Eno."

Frippertronics is the name of the tape system which Fripp uses to accompany him in concert. It consists of two tape recorders, one of which records what Fripp is playing. The tape is then passed on to the next recorder which plays back the recording. The delay time is determined by how far the two recorders are from each other. Other than this Fripp uses only a volume control and a fuzz pedal. This being what he calls an "appropriate level of technology" for him. The system was first used by Fripp on the Fripp/Eno collaborations.

Of that partnership Fripp says; "Eno and I approach roughly the same problems from different viewpoints but substantially the same. It's a qualitative similarity. We have roughly the same kind of background. It's a remarkable collaboration. For no rational reason the names Fripp and Eno have been linked for seven years now. We've always worked incredibly well together, I think, because we treat each other with respect and genuine fondness. I trust his instincts. It may be that other people have viewpoints which are equally valid for themselves and I understand that Eno's way of looking at things doesn't work for everyone."

Fripp also feels that the music of the '80s is collaborations. This is borne out by his actions for a new Fripp/Eno album will start in September, he will play on Eno's forthcoming solo lp and he played on the new Talking Heads album which is produced by Eno. He describes the lp as "particularly cooking" and says it might be the album of 1980.

Fripp does not like to be called an electronic musician. "I think there are three categories of electric guitar and three categories of electronic music. With guitar the first is acoustic guitar with a pickup. The sound is awful,

photo by Hal Kohnman

Fripp cont'd. from page 11

Then there's the solid body electric. There was a new instrument but not a music to match. Probably when Hendrix came along you had the electric guitar and it's own music. Now there's also where the guitar is a keyboard for a synthesizer. There are possibilities for a completely new music, with the guitar.

With electronic music it's the same thing. First you had electronic Bach and all that silliness. Then instead of sounding like a horn it simply sounds like a synthesizer. The third is a synthesizer which makes electronic "sounds." It has no keyboard but it is an electronic musical vocabulary. It does not sound like traditional music. I think that as a guitarist I'm in between the second and third categories. I really don't understand all of this electronics stuff too well. Someone like Larry Fast does but he is an electronic musician."

Fripp's plans for the future are tinged by his pessimistic outlook. He plans to release an album of pure Frippertronics in September and to add more albums of that kind to the market. But the true third work in the trilogy that includes *Exposure* and the pure Frippertronics, is *Discotronics* which he describes as "Fripp's approach to disco." All of this is to come out before the fall of 1981 when four planets will line up. Fripp feels that this is a herald of some important disaster. This is the point of the "drive to 1981," to awaken people to this. He feels also that after 1984 it will be hard to travel, that even his small anti-tour is having gas problems. As for that: "At the moment I'm looking for premises in England to open a guitar school. Which I think will be my main project in the mid and late 1980's. Since travel will be difficult it will be a part of the community's entertainment. Problems will have to be handled on a local level. This is what I feel I should do. That's the thing about small, mobile organizations. They're to provide an alternative to the dinosaurs (large corporations, etc.). It isn't a question of smashing the dinosaurs, they're already dead. The only way they're up there twitching is that we believe they're alive. If the American public thought that there was no gas instead of thinking it's a way to raise the price things would be much worse than they are. If it was generally sussed that they had broken down there would be panic. This gives us time. For example, if all the record stores in the U.S. opened on a Friday night to let local groups play you would have a new source of entertainment and employment for the musicians. The future is grim but not hopeless."

RIVER CITY MUSIC

by Ron Young



The River City Music Crew

photo by Robbin Cresswell

This is the first in a series on local small businesses that we will feature over the course of the next six issues. River City Music is a little over a year old. They were one of It's Only Rock'n'Roll's first advertisers and we've both sort of grown up together. This article isn't being written just because they advertise with us because we genuinely like Morris Kalt and John Ramirez, the two dudes who run River City Music, and feel that they along with other music stores in the San Antonio area (Pro Musician, Caldwell's, Kirk Scott's Drum City and Picker's Paradise in San Marcos) are doing a lot for Texas musicians by supplying them with the best musical equipment possible.

"How did it start?, John (Ramirez) repeats my question before answering it. "It started one evening at Burgundy Woods, as a matter of fact, when Claude Morgan was playing. Morris (Kalt) and I were just out listening to groups and he had this idea about starting the store and me leaving Caldwell's at which I had worked for seven years where we'd met. It was the idea of a professional thing. All these other stores, including the one I worked for, would not go that extra step to get the real innovative equipment that musicians were asking for like all the new things in sound re-enforcement and synthesizers. They were still into P.A. columns. But every concert you'd go to the bands had good sound re-enforcement parts to create fidelity instead of just garage band-type sounds from mediocre P.A. equipment. That was our original thing to get into good P.A. equipment and mixers. Studio quality stuff that no one else in SA had yet, although Pro Musician does now. All of this was already happening in Denver and on the West Coast. This way SA musicians could benefit from actually presenting a more professional package by

sounding that way. It's that simple. So we carry the equipment that the quote stars are using, which of course is an incentive," John goes on.

Everyone who works at River City Music is himself a musician. John is currently in a group with Paul Follis their electronics repairman called Amoretta, but he has roots in the SA music scene as far back as The Chaynes and Rocksand for all you older readers who used to hang out at Sam Kinsey's Teen Canteen. Robert Adams, another salesman, is currently in River City Pleasure.

One thing I noticed about the salesmen in the store is that they all seemed to be rather lowkey and not high pressure. "We don't have to push anything here," replies Morris. "Because we carry all the major name brand equipment like JBL, Electro Voice (P.A. equipment); Fender, Gibson, Marshall (guitars and amplifiers) as well as a major drum line that includes Rogers, Ludwig and Slingerland. We also work closely with other music stores in town when we can't help a customer because we don't carry certain items like horns. So we'll send someone over to, say, Music Mart. Another thing about us is that we service everything we sell and employ Gene Warner who does excellent guitar repairs."

How is the economic crunch effecting business?

"Business for us isn't down. Because one of the essential things, I think, is that people still need to be entertained and will go out to see a band at a club. There are a lot of kids who are in high school or college who just work and are buying band equipment and are practicing in garages. Bands that have yet to surface. These guys are smart because it's no longer feasible to just blow off school or a job and try to squeak by just playing gigs and making a few hundred bucks a month.

These guys are saving up and paying off top quality equipment and then going out to play," John reflects. "We're trying to get away from the thing that is going to keep SA in a hole and stagnant by carrying equipment that helps local musicians become more innovative," Morris adds.

River City Music is a corporation and the money made is in large part reinvested into the business. "We incorporated mainly to protect ourselves," says Morris who is sole proprietor. "We do offer shares in the company to employees though because the more interest they have in it the more they care about it."

Perhaps salesman/musician Robert Adams summed up the River City philosophy best when he said, "It's a pleasure to work for the musicians here in San Antonio because most of 'em are real good people and the idea that maybe I'll be able to help somebody out with their equipment is what wakes me up in the morning."

• • • • •

Pablo's Grove, a perennial favorite S.A. band, is recording an album of all originals. Member Phil Arroyo says the group hopes to have it out in the fall. They currently play fairly often at The Place Next Door.



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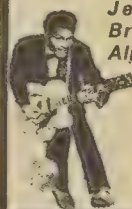
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The shape of Things To Come

The 1970s are finally about to end. Less than five months to go. After Elvis in the 50s and the Beatles in the 60s, rock'n'roll fans anxiously awaited the Third Great Era of Rock and Freedom in the mid-70s. Instead, there was Watergate, Comet Kohoutek, quad stereo and disco, bummers one and all. Not exactly what a lot of us had in mind. There will be damn little nostalgia for the 1970s, especially 70s music, unless you happen to dig punk. There's been Springsteen and Roxy Music and Steely Dan and Bob Marley and a few others but...oh, hell, you know what I mean. It's time to start looking ahead to the 'eighties.

It was initially fashionable to view punk as rock's last gasp. That was wishful thinking. Punk was more of a warning that rock'n'roll will never die, and from the punk/new wave/power pop scene of the last few years have emerged several artists who are likely to stick around: Nick Lowe, Cheap Trick, Dire Straits, Elvis Costello, the Clash and the Cars come quickly to mind. The Stones and Van Morrison have demonstrated staying power, the Who ain't dead, I expect more great music from Led Zep, Badfinger has re-formed and Doug Sahm keeps on rollin' along. Rock has fallen far from previous heights but is in better shape at the dawn of the 'eighties than it's been in many years.

I'm also hopeful about the state of rock'n'roll because we're coming upon a lull before the storm, as in 1949-53 and 1960-63. Disco, thank god, is beginning to die. Folks are at last coming to recognize how boring and empty and sterile it really is. With any luck we've heard the last of Outlaws, Luckenbach and Cosmic Cowboys. Soul music is in tragic disarray. Funk and fusion have become aimless. There may soon be a clamor for something new and better.

The state of the record industry is also favorable...to rock'n'roll. The industry is almost entirely comprised of a handful of conglomerates that are

greedy, unresponsive, spoiled rotten and precariously perched. Its soft underbelly is vulnerable to anyone who can cut prices, forget about hype and concentrate on providing music that sells on its own merits. The situation was similar about 30 years ago; at that time (1948-55), hundreds of small, independent, labels generated a rock'n'roll and R&B revolution before the mainstream (pop music) record industry knew what was happening. It won't be as easy in the 'eighties but it could happen again.

I'm not sure what all of this may mean in terms of record collecting. Record rarity is a function of supply and demand. There have always been certain artists whose records were made in very small quantities because the market was small or a record company had limited resources or because the artist was unknown and untested. Such records, if their musical quality is at all decent or their style intriguing, are the ones now considered "collectable."

Note that this was an after-the-fact process. No collectors decided at the time that records by Charlie Feathers, for example, would be collectable in 10 or 20 years. I suspect that's beginning to change. It's going to be tempting, if it isn't already, for collectors to grab a bunch of obscure singles when they're released and hold onto them in hopes of making a big profit in several years.

This has probably happened in terms of punk. It wouldn't surprise me if three copies of most punk singles went immediately into the hands of collectors or speculators for every one copy that was actually bought or stolen by punk music fans. If in the future there emerges a demand for punk/new wave singles, speculators will bring their carefully-hoarded goodies out of hiding and attempt to make a killing.

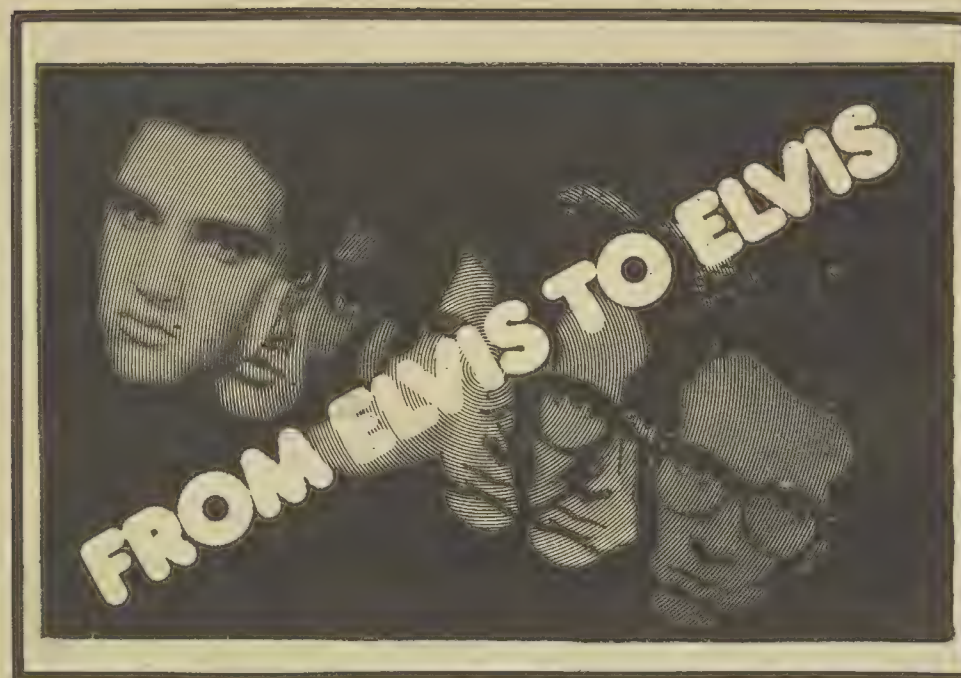
The point is that such speculating could be profitable if you're the only one who's doing it. But if a bunch of other people are doing the same thing

and your "rarities" all hit the market at the same time, then you're not gonna make much money on the deal. And that's fine with me. I used to have a good time collecting political campaign buttons but hoarders and speculators have absolutely ruined the hobby in the past 12 years. It's a royal pain in the ass and I hope that the same thing doesn't happen to record collecting.

My general advice about record collecting in the 1980s is to watch for potential trends and new styles but to be wary of speculating as to future rarity. The supply side of the supply-and-demand equation is not nearly as predictable, evident or honest as it used to be. Better yet, just buy the records you like and don't worry about how rare or collectable they might be in 10 years. If you must collect for profit, the safest thing to do is look for certain pre-70s rock, doo-wop, rock-a-billy, blues, jazz and hillbilly records before they become even scarcer than they already are...which is very scarce indeed. A thousand copies of the first Ramones album will do little else than take up space in your apartment but ten copies of Robert Johnson's "Hellhound on My Trail" will pay the rent for a long time.

Whatever directions and dimensions your record collection takes in the next ten years, enjoy it and have fun. After the 70s, god knows that you (and I) deserve it.

David Lara, formerly bassist with local rockers Sabatahz, has joined a new rock band called Crown. Crown consists of Albert Crown on drums and brother David Crown and James Vellejo on guitars, Steve Cooper vocals and Lara on bass. Matt Denzer handles light and sound for the group. Crown is currently gigging around town at the South Cross Villa and Shep's Palace. Meanwhile, Sabatahz has reformed and is back up to their old strength.

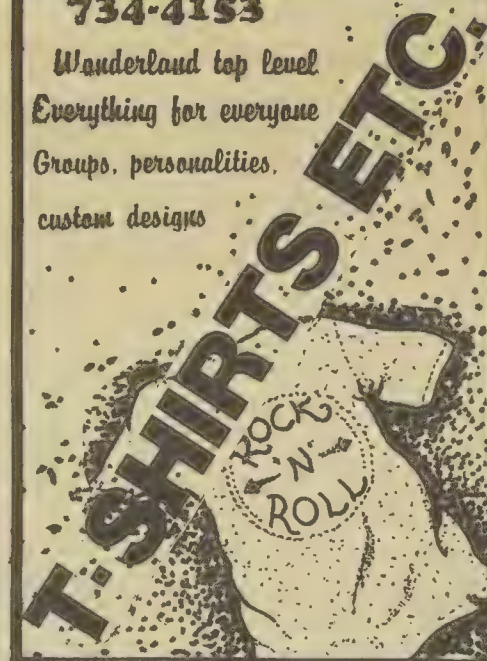


HEYOKA

Heyoka is currently recording. But what was supposed to be an EP is turning into a full-scale album said manager Bill Angelini. A single will soon be released called "Disco Sucks" which should gain the attention of KMAC/KISS's Disco Destruction audience.

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8-14-Bill Bruford/Extreme Heat/Armadillo
8-15-Gato Barbieri/Tom Browne Band/Armadillo
8-16-Long John Baldry/Armadillo
8-17-Peter Frampton/Auditorium
8-17-Tim Curry/Armadillo
8-18-Alan Price/Armadillo
8-23-Rory Gallagher/Armadillo
8-23-25-Delbert McClinton/Soap Creed Saloon
8-24-Amazing Rhythm Aces/Katy Moffat/Armadillo
8-25-Magazine/Armadillo
9-15&16-Talking Heads/Armadillo

DALLAS

8-11-Nervebreakers/Standing Wave/The Skuds/Palladium
8-13-Greg Kihn/Palladium
8-14-Gato Barbieri/Palladium
8-15-Bill Bruford/Palladium
8-17-Long John Baldry/Palladium
8-18-Asleep At The Wheel/Palladium
8-26-Farewell To A Texas Summer/Foghat, Rush, Billy Thorp/Little River Band/Pat Travers/Point Blank/Cotton Bowl/Show starts at 3:00 pm

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The Godfather	1703 N. St. Mary's	(224-6510)	Jazz (Mon & Tues)
The Knave	1375 Austin Hwy.	(826-2042)	Rock & Disco
The Place Next Door	Wurzbach & Data Point	(699-5935)	Progressive Country
Play Pen	2315 San Pedro	(732-0441)	Live Rock (Fri & Sat)
Razzle Dazzle	2376 Austin Hwy. at Perrin Beitel Rd.	(657-3103)	Live Rock (Fri & Sat)
Reed's Red Derby	9715 San Pedro	(349-2134)	Jazz, Blues & Rock (Thurs-Sat)
The Road Apple N.E.	4439 Walzem	(657-5935)	Country Rock
The Shadows	11799 West Ave.	(341-9991)	Progressive Country (Mon-Sat)
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Robert Fripp/Exposure/Polydor

— To be frank, this album scares me. Fripp's apocalyptic/apolitical views are aptly expressed in his music. The looping back effect of the "Frippertronics" system adds to this as do the mostly frantic vocals. The famed "You Burn Me Up I'm A Cigarette" is a logical continuation of Fripp's later King Crimson work. And Daryl Hall's vocals on this seem to have a lot more balls than when he sings with Mr. Oates.

But besides frantic sonic disturbances as "Disengage" and the aforementioned "You Burn Me Up" there are some extremely nice "ballads," such as "North Star" and "Mary" which Ms. Terre Roche very charmingly sings. (Yes, of the folk trio) Plus there are instrumentals, wierd background effects and speeches. Like I said, it scares me, especially how well Fripp plays guitar. Unbelievable, that.

On to 1981! **David Arthur

Sirius/Rising/Elcric/Flow Records

— Two members of Sirius, Todd Potter and Rod Prince, were once members of the Bubble Puppy and later Demian. The present band actually played under the Bubble Puppy name for awhile, (for more information on these matters see elsewhere in this issue). Their advertising reads "Sirius/Rising, an impressive new album on Elcric Flow Records and Tapes," and it is highly impressive. Packaging is excellent and on par with the major labels as is the slick production, the best to come out of Texas yet. This is pretty amazing in itself when you realize that the band put out the album themselves.

The album contains some variety. Most of the cuts on side one are similar mellow rockers but have good melodies and lyrics. This side ends with "Guacamole Rock'n'Roll" a perfect example of Texas raunch'n'roll. On side two "Girl Like You," "Litany" and "Smile at Me" bring back the old Bubble Puppy brilliance and the hard Demian sound lacking on the rest of the album. These are the most exciting cuts on the lp. The remaining cuts on this side revert to the mellow, but this time somewhat more countryfied, sound. A strong pop influence rounds out a pretty good range of sounds, and so does the fact that Rod, Todd and bass player George take turns doing lead vocals and writing the songs, each with his own style.

The album is a success in doing what it was meant to do; create a good commercial sound. That sound is a good as that of Player, Toto or any of the other pseudo rock groups. I like it better. **Frank Haecker

BLACKFOOT/STRIKES/ATCO—

Sure cure for insomnia. **David Arthur
LENNY & SQUIGGY/LENNY & THE SQUIGTONES/CASABLANCA—Melt this into hair spray. **Ron Young.

Atlanta Rhythm Section/Underdog/Polydor

— Another mainstreamish ARS album similar to the previous two. The songs aren't as commercial as last year's cliché ridden "So Into You"; instead they're a bit more complex but lack the necessary unity to make them sound interesting. Like so many other bands these days, they rely too much on the beat and not enough on the melody which makes the songs sound either choppy or lifeless. ARS has even managed to turn a perfect song like the Classics IV's "Spooky" into a dull, mechanical exercise. Listen to both versions and you'll get a small idea of what late-'70s rock is missing. **Clyde Kimsey

Nils Lofgren/Nils/A&M—

Uh-oh, another Nils album. Boy do I hate to be let down again by one of my faves. The last LP from him...Hey, this is good, very good. The best since *Cry Tough*. "No Mercy," a pugilist's tale featuring slashing guitar chords and a mean left jab is the watchword for the whole record. It's about time too that someone rocked up Randy Newman's "Baltimore" and Nils is just the guy. Exhilarating organ on this one by Doug Riley. Every other track is a delight, especially "Steal Away" and "A Fool Like Me" which features David Sanborn on sax. Nils has a good producer in Bob Ezrin who's gotten our boy back into fighting shape. **RY

Blue Oyster Cult/Mirrors/Columbia

— Ponder castration, dear readers and the limpness resulting there from. Then go listen to this lp, it is perfect eunuch music being bland, dull and inoffensive. Only "The Great Sun Jester" and "The Vigil" have any life. The man with the knife is Tom Werman, a producer of those fab four kids, Cheap Trick. Here he does exactly the opposite of what he did for Cheap Trick; he brings out the Cult's worst. I mean some of these songs could have been done by Fleetwood Mac. Where's the supreme Cult leader, Sandy Pearlman and his odd lyrics? This is the first one by the he didn't produce and, boy, it shows.

On the whole it seems as if the Cult has left their "career of evil" to become the latter side of "dominance and submission." Too bad, cause, dear readers, this group used to be good. It's not the pop so much as the staleness of the formula: heavy metal band wants money so they sell out. Sounds like Zeppelin or something. Thought this group had more class. For Cult completists and Bob Welch fans only. **David Arthur



John Cougar/John Cougar-Riva

Cougar defiantly stares out from the cover of his first album for Rod Stewart's label, sucking on a cancer stick ala Michael Parks as James Dean, Good image. But Parks wasn't Dean. "Night Dancin'", side ones first cut is too reminiscent of Van The Man's "Wild Night" to suit me so I won't say anything more. Except that Cougar in his singing and lyric imagery is as close as you can get to being Eddie Money. But why anybody'd want to try is beyond me. "Miami" sounds like a single though. **RY

Mick Taylor/Mick Taylor/Columbia

— I'm not trying to tell Eric Clapton what to do but if he'd just bend an ear and listen to Taylor's first solo effort he might learn that he can still be more than the Don Williams of the guitar. The album is a grab bag of musical styles with some jazzy numbers, a slow blues title "Slow Blues" and some rock'n'roll like "Leather Jacket" and a Stonesish tune called "Broken Hands." Taylor's vocal chops ain't half bad either. **RY

The Rumour/Frogs, Sprouts, Clogs and Krauts/Arista

— I really admired The Rumour's '77 LP *Max* with its Brinsley Schwarz/Band-styled music, so I was glad to see that they'd finally made another one. However, this LP is largely experimental with its many rhythm changes and strange lyrics on some of the songs like "Frozen Years" and "We Believe In You New Age". It's an interesting album from one of the best rockin'bands in recent years. It just takes some closer listening than I had anticipated and much more challenging than many new releases so far. **RY



David Bowie/Lodger/RCA

— When you find an album where the names David Bowie and Brian Eno are featured, you never know what to expect. You know it will never be ordinary nor mundane. What they have created in *Lodger* is a panorama of European, African, and Asian travel and imagery.

The idea is a good one, the lyrics are bizarre, yet intriguing, and the music is ever-changing. Stasis is not a word to be used in regard to this album. Neither can "success" nor "failure." Perhaps the ultimate word to describe this album would be "eccentricity."

Bowie's vocalizations seem nearly to be random selections of style and emotion on several songs tending to destroy the intensity of the lyrics.

Reviews for the album have been mixed. So are my feelings. I variously like and dislike it.

Favorite songs are: "African Night Shift" (with Eno listed as cricket menace), "Red Sails," and "Repetition."

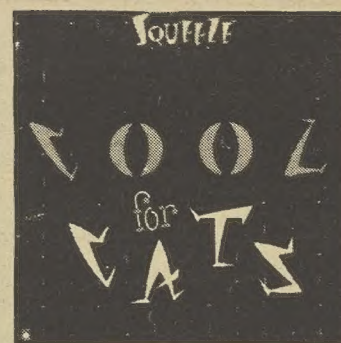
Everyone seems to be raving about "DJ" but I don't particularly care for it. **Scott A. Cupp

Vangelis/China/Polydor

— Unlike his last two or three albums, *China* tends to have more of the style of *Spiral* and *Albedo .039*. It sounds less computerish and artificial. The songs have interesting patterns and sometimes sound like a symphony. Yes, there's an accent of oriental music blended throughout the lp, but not enough for "Western listeners" to feel alienated. It has a wide variety of songs ranging from one like "The Tao of Love" to the powerful "Dragon." **Clyde Kimsey

THE SEX PISTOLS/THE GREAT ROCK AND ROLL SWINDLE/VIRGIN

— A fitting end to the legend. Remindful though of a Ronco sampler. Still Sid Vicious singing "My Way" is not to be missed and neither are disco versions of "God Save" and "Anarchy." Diverse, crude, weird, different. In other words, typical Sex Pistols if there is such a thing. **David Arthur.



Squeeze/Cool For Cats/A&M

— Songs about Sex, Drink, Drugs and Rock'n'Roll from the former U.K. Squeeze bunch. So what's so new about these topics? Well, for one these guys aren't serious about their subjects like so many heavier bands are. They're rather clever with words too, these chaps. And they do have a way with a melody as well. So, instead of reaching for that Van Halen album next time you're shopping at Arm and Leg grab a Squeeze. **RY

Neil Young & Crazy Horse/Rust Never Sleeps/Warner Bros.

— Even though I enjoyed last years comeback album *Comes A Time* I felt it needed a couple rockers on it to round it out. Neil's latest does just that and for me it's his best effort since *After The Goldrush*. The first side is just Neil on acoustic guitar and harmonica singing some his most expressive lyrics ever, especially "Thrasher". Side two finds him backed by one of the best rock bands ever - Crazy Horse. (The band the Eagles will never be.) Young should make this a permanent team. "Powderfinger," the poignant story of a young man who died too young, and "Out of the Blue/Into the Black" the story of Johnny Rotten are the best cuts here. Young proves that "Rock and roll can never die." One of the best LPs of '79. **RY

The Kinks/Low Budget/Arista

— If this is what the Kinks do on a low budget I hope they stay there. This is one of the best albums of this year. It's styles range from pseudo disco ("Superman") to ballads ("Little Bit Of Emotion") to the reggae-like "National Health." Through it all the Davies' witty and masterful songwriting is present; he seems to really have enjoyed making this album. That also holds for the rest of the band. At times they seem to take joyous delight at making fun of gas crises, ("Gallon Of Gas,") and the problems of living in today's inflationary world, (the title track). On the whole this lp is pretty damn good. I mean just when you think rock may have had it you see the Kinks back on the charts. It's not *PXR5* but it is better than 99.9% of the 'crap comin' out. Final word: *GET IT!* **David Arthur

Van Halen II/Warner Bros.

— Loud and pretentious, this lp is by far worse than this group's debut lp which at least was not so vain an effort. So what if they can make noise? So can a lot of groups and a lot more creatively too.

Part of the problem is the success of the first lp. These guys now have album sales to match their egos and it's gotten them so they don't care. Know what? Neither do I. **David Arthur

Motorhead/Overkill/Bronze

— Astounding. How can a bass be a lead instrument. Well, it can't be anything else if the bassist in question is Lemmy. Loud does not begin to describe this lp but it is also very different in that it's loudness comes from more than turned up amps. The musicians are what's hot. A good choice for a World War III soundtrack, this is an impressive second lp that contains the loudest music I've ever heard. Buy or steal it but get it! **David Arthur



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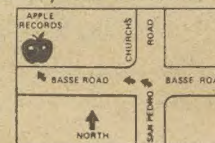


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